

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 01109 191132 Z

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ACTION EA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 1109

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, SEATO, ASEAN, RP, MY

SUBJECT: MUSLIM DISSIDENT PROBLEM IN PHILIPPINES

1. SUMMARY. MFA SECGEN ZAITON CALLED ME IN TODAY TO BRIEF ME ON MALAYSIAN POSITION REGARDING RECENT GOP MOVES IN INFORMING SEATO AND ASEAN OF THE ALLEGED COMPLICITY OF GOM IN MUSLIM DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. ZAITON SAID HE WAS ALSO CALLING IN OTHER MEMBERS OF SEATO FOR A SIMILAR BRIEFING. UPSHOT OF THIS REVIEW WAS REITERATION OF GOM POSITION THAT ONLY A DEAL ON GOP CLAIM TO SABAH COULD ELICIT FULL COOPERATION OF GOM IN HELPING GOP HANDLE MUSLIM DISSIDENTS IN PHILIPPINES. END SUMMARY.

2. ZAITON BEGAN BY SAYING GOP HAD CLEARLY REGISTERED TO BOTH SEATO AND ASEAN A CHARGE THAT GOM WAS NOT ONLY IMPLICATED IN ASSISTANCE TO THE MUSLIM INSURRECTIONISTS IN SOUTHERN
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 KUALA 01109 191132 Z

PHILIPPINES BUT ALSO BY CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT GOM WAS HOLDING UP GOP FOR BLACKMAIL, OFFERING TO CALL OFF MUSTAPHA IN RETURN FOR AN ABANDONMENT OF GOP CLAIM TO SABAH. ZAITON SAID THE GOM VIEWS THIS SITUATION WITH CONSIDERABLE ALARM SINCE IT SERIOUSLY THREATENS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND UNITY OF ASEAN GROUP.

3. ZAITON SAID THERE HAD BEEN EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ON THIS PROBLEM, MOST IMPORTANTLY WITH ROMULO WHEN HE WAS IN K. L. FOR ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, AND BETWEEN GHAZALI AND MELCHOR IN NEW DELHI. EXCHANGE BETWEEN ROMULO AND RAZAK WAS FULL AND FRANK, SAID ZAITON. ROMULO HAD PRESENTED A NUMBER OF ALLEGATIONS OF MUSTAPHA'S INVOLVEMENT IN MUSLIM INSURRECTION INCLUDING AN AFFIDAVIT SIGNED BY AN AIRPLANE PILOT WHO ACCOMPANIED MUSTAPHA TO A MEETING IN HONG KONG WITH OSMENA. THIS ALLEGED THAT MUSTAPHA HAD MADE A CONTRIBUTION TO OSMENA'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. RAZAK HAD RETORTED THAT THIS WAS PROBABLY TRUE AND THAT MUSTAPHA HAD MADE THIS CONTRIBUTION IN RETURN FOR A COMMITMENT FROM OSMENA THAT LATTER, IF ELECTED, WOULD DROP CLAIM TO SABAH. RAZAK MADE IT CLEAR TO ROMULO THAT GOM WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ENCOURAGEMENT OF MUSLIM DISSIDENTS BUT HE ADMITTED THAT MUSTAPHA PROBABLY WAS, AS WELL AS PERHAPS OTHER SABAHANS, BUT SO LONG AS GOP EXERCISED A THREAT TO SOVEREIGNTY OF MALAYSIA AND PARTICULARLY TO INTEGRITY OF SABAH, HE WAS UNABLE TO CONTROL THESE ACTIVITIES. RAZAK TOLD ROMULO THAT ONLY WITH REMOVAL OF PHILIPPINE CLAIM TO SABAH WOULD HE BE IN A POSITION TO INSTITUTE THE KIND OF CONTROLS IN SABAH LIKELY TO CURTAIL THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY. RAZAK POINTED OUT THAT THE CORREGIDOR INCIDENT IN PHILIPPINES HAD HAD A LASTING IMPACT ON PEOPLE OF SABAH WHO TO THIS DAY WERE NOT PERSUADED THAT GOP WAS NOT TRAINING EXPEDITIONARY FORCES TO TO INVADE THEIR AREA.

4. ROMULO REPORTEDLY HAD ASKED RAZAK TO COME TO MANILA TO DISCUSS PROBLEM WITH MARCOS. RAZAK SAID HE COULD NOT DO THIS UNLESS THERE WAS SOME REASON FOR HIM TO GO, IMPLYING THAT IF THERE WERE SOME AGREEMENT ON THE SABAH CLAIM, HE WOULD BE MORE THAN PLEASED TO GO TO MANILA.

5. ZAITON SAID THE GOM FULLY APPRECIATED DIFFICULT SITUATION THAT CONFRONTED MARCOS AT THIS TIME AND BY NO MEANS EXPECTED MARCOS TO PUBLICLY BOW HIS HEAD IN DEFEAT ON ISSUE
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PAGE 03 KUALA 01109 191132 Z

OF CLAIM. THERE WERE, HE SAID, MANY WAYS IN WHICH THIS COULD

BE ACCOMPLISHED: ONE WHICH WAS SUGGESTED BY GHAZALI TO MELCHOR IN NEW DELHI WOULD INVOLVE A MODIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT CLAUSE IN THE PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION SO THAT SOVEREIGN BOUNDARIES OF PHILIPPINES WOULD BE LIMITED TO THOSE NOW EXISTING. BUT, HE SAID, THERE WERE UNDOUBTEDLY OTHER WAYS THAT THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED.

6. ZAITON CONCEDED THAT EVEN IF GOP WERE TO MAKE AN UNDERTAKING ON THE CLAIM THERE COULD BE NO GUARANTEE THAT GOM COULD OFFER EFFECTIVE HELP TO TAMP DOWN SERIOUS SITUATION IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES THAT HAD SUCH LONG ROOTS IN HISTORY. ON OTHER HAND, WITH FULL COOPERATION OF SABAH GOVERNMENT FOR BORDER AND SEA PATROLS AND ARRANGEMENTS THAT COULD BE MADE WITH REGARD TO BARTER TRADE, AND ALSO EFFECTIVE CONTROL ON MOVEMENT OF PEOPLES, THERE WAS AT LEAST A FAIR CHANCE THAT GOM COULD BE HELPFUL. WHAT HAD TO BE EMPHASIZED, HE SAID, WAS THAT RAZAK WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE THIS HELP UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

7. I ASKED ZAITON IF HE HAD ANY PARTICULAR REASON IN REVIEWING THIS SITUATION FOR ME. HE SAID IT WAS MERELY TO KEEP US INFORMED. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE, OF COURSE, CONCERNED BY THIS PROBLEM THAT APPEARED TO BE THREATENING STABILITY OF GOP AS WELL AS UNITY OF ASEAN GROUP BUT WE WERE CONVINCED THAT ANY RESOLUTION OF TENSIONS BETWEEN GOP AND GOM COULD ONLY BE ACHIEVED IN BILATERAL FRAMEWORK OR POSSIBLY WITHIN ASEAN CONTEXT. HE AGREED AND SAID THAT GOM HAD NOT YET RECEIVED A FORMAL RESPONSE FROM GOP REGARDING RAZAK'S CONVERSATION WITH ROMULO. ROMULO HAD AGREED TO PASS RAZAK'S VIEWS REGARDING THE SABAH CLAIM TO PRESIDENT MARCOS.

8. COMMENT: ZAITON'S BRIEFING, WHICH PRESUMABLY WILL ALSO INCLUDE THE U. K., AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, IS PROBABLY A REFLEX ACTION TO THE GOP'S NOTIFICATION OF THE SEATO MEMBERS, BUT AT LEAST IN THE TERMS HE PROVIDED ME, DID NOT SEEM INTENDED TO INCREASE HEAT OF THE PROBLEM BUT MAY BE SEEKING POSSIBLE SIDE PRESSURES ON MANILA TO MAKE A DEAL ON SABAH CLAIM.

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